

December 22, 2011

South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

425 East Capitol Avenue

Pierre, SD 57501

Phone: 605-773-3269

Web site: www.mva.sd.gov

COMING TOGETHER—EXPANDING THE SEA OF GOODWILL IN POST 9/11 AMERICA

On Tuesday, January 17, the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation will host a gathering aimed at building public understanding of the sacrifices South Dakota military personnel and their families have made on behalf of us all since 9/11.

This gathering will take place at the Holiday Inn City Center in Sioux Falls (100 W. 8th Street) from 8:30 am to noon. The Foundation's goal is to encourage communication and networking among the public, nonprofit, and government entities that provide support to our military personnel and their families, as well as expand the "Sea of Goodwill," especially in the areas of education, employment and healthcare.

Colonel David Sutherland, a decorated Ranger and combat veteran, will be the keynote speaker.

8:30 Doors open/Continental breakfast

8:50 Welcome, Mary Tidwell, SFACF Board of Directors

9:00 Keynote, "Warrior and Family Support", Col. David Sutherland, Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

9:45 Break

10:00 Panel, "The Post-9/11 Experience", service providers, volunteers, and veterans discuss resources and needs affecting Post-9/11 service personnel

11:00 Community Roundtable, "Expanding the Sea of Goodwill"

12:00 Adjourn

More information on this gathering can be found at the Foundation's website www.sfacf.org. Interested participants may register by visiting the Foundation's website or by emailing: reservations@sfacf.org or by calling: 605-336-7055 ext. 22.

Inside this issue:

Elks Deliver Christmas Spirit	2
SDNG Delivers Holiday Spirit	3
Treats to the Troops	3
VABHHCS Names New Chief of Staff	4
Upcoming Events	4



ELKS MAKE THIS A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER FOR SOUTH DAKOTA'S VETERANS

In November, members of the Pierre Elks Lodge 1953 delivered collection boxes to over 30 locations throughout Pierre, Fort Pierre, Blunt, Presho and Draper. This past weekend those very same members went back to each of the respective sites to gather the collection boxes. Many of the Pierre Elks members have been working on this project for numerous years so it came as no surprise when they arrived and the boxes were full. Even during a year when most of these communities were impacted by the flooding, the boxes were still full of an estimated \$16,000 worth of presents to be delivered to the veterans at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home and the VA Hospital in Hot Springs. The boxes were full of socks, underwear, sleep apparel, blankets, puzzles, books, games, food, hygiene products, CDs, and other items. In addition \$650 worth prepaid phone cards and 1,000 pounds of bird seed were provided.

The students at Jefferson Elementary School played a major role in this project by donating 47 bottles of lotion, 91 tubes of chap sticks, 52 cans of deodorant, 84 toothbrushes, 96 tubes of toothpaste, 31 bottles of body wash, 125 bars of soap, 4 combs, 42 bottles of shampoo, 31 bottles of conditioner, 105 pairs of white athletic socks and eight blankets.

Students in Pierre's seven schools created over 785 greeting cards for veterans. Perkins restaurant donated over 250 treat bags of goodies. The Girl Scouts made ornaments. Pierre Senior Citizens contributed over 68 dozen homemade cookies. Numerous community women's organizations contributed items specifically for women veterans.



ing so they made this Christmas one that South Dakota veterans will remember.

So, although December brings the only Christmas day, there is always Christmas spirit in what we say and do that lasts throughout the year. Thanks Elks Lodge 1953 and your partners for giving the gift of Christmas and for your continued support of South Dakota's veterans.



ELVES FROM THE SDNG DELIVER HOLIDAY SPIRIT

The South Dakota National Guard held their annual Christmas party for the residents at the Mitchel J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home on Saturday, December 17.

Their sponsorship of this event is in connection with the Elder Tree Program in the Hills area. Over 280 ornaments with names and gift ideas were put on trees throughout the Rapid City area for people wishing to donate a gift to veterans or to elders who wouldn't otherwise receive a gift.

Guard members and their families collected the gifts and spent Saturday morning delivering them. They ended the day with dinner at the State Veterans Home; followed by Christmas caroling, holiday readings and presentation of the gifts.

Our troops and military family members have won the respect and gratitude of all for their commitment to serve and defend this country, but also for their commitment to keep the Christmas spirit alive for those that have served this country.

As we gather this holiday season, let our thoughts turn to the brave men and women who serve and have served our country. Their selfless sacrifice is an inspiration to us all and part of the unbroken line of heroism that has made our freedom possible.

What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace. (Agnes Pharo)



TREATS TO TROOPS

Community members and organizations in Howard sent a holiday treat to South Dakota Army and Air National Guard members serving overseas Saturday. Mark Gieb of De Smet, the Jensen family of Howard, along with the Sky's the Limit Youth Foundation and the Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls, teamed up to send nearly 750 pounds of donated beef jerky sticks to South Dakota troops serving abroad this holiday season.

More than 500 soldiers and airmen will receive the beef treats by the New Year.

The donation was a way for these community members and organizations to say thank you and to give back to the men and women that defend our country.



VABHHCS ANNOUNCES NEW CHIEF OF STAFF

The VA Black Hills Health Care System has announced the appointment of Andrea Conti, D.O. to the position of Chief of Staff effective December 18, 2011. Dr. Conti comes to the Black Hills from the Northern Arizona VA Health Care System in Prescott, Arizona, where she served as Service Line Manager Specialty and Diagnostics Services and Chief, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Service for three years.

In her role as Chief of Staff, Dr. Conti will serve as the Physician Executive and a member of the Executive Leadership team at VA Black Hills Health Care System. The Chief of Staff is responsible for the development, organization, implementation, and support of patient care activities of the clinical and allied health services to assure that VA Black Hills' patient care mission can be fulfilled while ensuring compliance with the standards required by the Joint Commission and other accrediting bodies. Dr. Conti will be responsible for the professional practice of all members of the Medical Staff and for the clinical and allied services aligned under the Chief of Staff including Primary Care and Specialty Medicine, Surgery and Specialty Care, Extended Care and Rehabilitation Medicine, Mental Health, and Diagnostics Services along with specialty programs including Women's Health, OEF/OIF/OND Program, Patient Advocacy, Clinical Applications, and Medical Staff Credentialing & Privileging.

Dr. Conti completed undergraduate studies in Biomedical Science/Religion from Western Michigan University, and graduated in 1989 from Michigan State University, with a Doctor of Osteopathy. Dr. Conti did her post-doctorial residency at Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Medical College of Virginia from 1991-1994.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 26—State Offices Closed

Jan. 2—State Offices Closed

Jan. 10—Legislative Session Opens

Jan. 17—SFACF Sea of Goodwill Conference—Sioux Falls Holiday Inn City Centre

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us
Web site: <http://mva.sd.gov>

